



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Stamford Department of Health and Social Services
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The Stamford Department of Health and Social Services (SDHSS) will recognize February as **American Heart Month** to create public awareness of risk factors for heart disease and stroke and to promote preventive measures.

Cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death in the United States. It is important to learn how to keep your heart healthy. Cardiovascular disease can be prevented in most individuals by reducing the risk factors that contribute to development of heart disease and stroke. According to Stamford's Director of Health and Social Services, Anne Fountain, MPH, "Thousands of lives could potentially be saved each year by simply controlling high blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels, eliminating cigarette smoking, eating healthy, increasing physical activity, and educating the public about the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke."

Tips for Families to Avoid Heart Disease and Stroke:

1. Encourage everyone to eat well-balanced meals, including (steamed, boiled, grilled or baked) lean meat, fish, vegetables, fruits and low fat products. Provide at least five daily servings of vegetables and fruit.
3. Offer water, low fat milk or fresh, unsweetened fruit juices to drink rather than soft drinks.
4. Include fruit or vegetables in your children's school lunch or snack.
5. Make sure you don't consume excess salt, especially through processed foods.
6. Plan more family activities outside. Add 30 minutes of regular physical activity daily and build physical activity into day-to-day chores. Take the stairs rather than the escalators or elevators, for example.
7. Make your home smoke-free and try to ensure that your children don't smoke or experience tobacco smoke anywhere else.
8. As a family member, set a good example by eating healthy, being physically active on a regular basis and by not smoking.

If you think anyone in your family is at risk for heart disease, check with your health professional.

For information about American Heart Month and fact sheets on heart disease and stroke, visit the American Heart Association website at www.heart.org, www.cdc.gov/heartdisease .